

UNITED STATES NAVY

# SEABEE

WINTER 2010

**'BEES LEND**

# **SKILLED HANDS**

**TO SPECIAL FORCES IN IRAQ**

ALSO INSIDE:

**'Bees Build For Wounded Warriors**

**Hospital Corpsmen's Impact in the Field**

**Staying Connected:**

**Technological Advances Keep Military Families in Touch**

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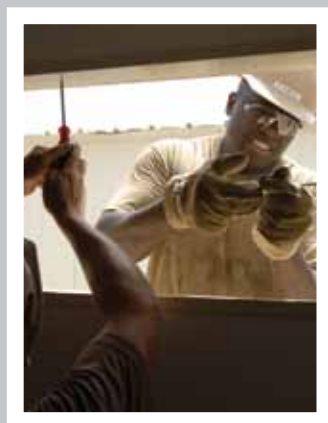
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*U.S. Army photo by Spc. Victor J. Ayala*

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Look for the Challenge Coin award in this issue!







A Seabee assigned to NMCB 5 places fill with a front-end loader on a project at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Sept. 2. NMCB 5 is deployed to Afghanistan executing general engineering, infrastructure construction and project management supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.  
*Photo by MC2 Ace Rheaume*

**C**ommitment.

It's one of the three Core Values of the Navy, and now more than ever a value the Seabees are helping America transcend throughout the world.

The Seabees, always a force enabler, are key contributors to multiple missions across the globe. They do more than provide structure for area commanders; they give America staying power. And when you are trying to introduce freedom – real freedom – to people who have known only tyranny, knowing that America is committed is just as valuable as knowing we are mighty.

From sustainment projects for Special Operations Task Force Central (SOTF-C) forces in Iraq, to our allies in the Philippines and even to extraordinary Sailors within our own ranks – Seabees understand, provide and enable commitment for America, the Navy and our Shipmates.

Our Winter 2010 issue centers itself on stories of Seabee commitment. In Iraq, Seabees are enabling Special Operations forces to continue their commitment of eradicating terrorists determined to crush the Iraqi people's growth toward freedom. In the Philippines, even more Seabees are helping the island nation's military build stronger, more professional forces so they too can enable freedom. Sometimes commitment means making sure your friends can remain committed as well.

On a personal level, Seabees – as all Sailors do – understand Honor, Courage and Commitment. However, few have had the opportunities to demonstrate it such as CEC (SCW/SW) Orrin T. Greene. We have his amazing story for you.

Even back home our family and friends understand commitment. Andi Edwards, ombudsman, 3<sup>rd</sup> NCR, explains how technology helps us keep our commitments to each other and



**MCC(SCW/EXW/SW/AW/SG)**  
James G. Pinsky

how much our spouse's role impacts us from afar. This entertaining and inspiring article led to her selection as our *Seabee* Challenge Coin recipient for Winter 2010. Congratulations, Andi!

At *Seabee* Magazine, we certainly understand commitment and strive to demonstrate ours to you in every issue. In this issue, we show you that not only did we read your *Seabee* Magazine Readership Survey feedback, we listened, too. Check out the special "Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says..." comments throughout the magazine for how we've already instituted many of your suggestions!

Indeed, Seabees completely understand commitment. And like all Sailors we do our best every day to live up to our Core Values. And we are even prouder to know that we help America keep her commitments, too.

CAN DO. Yesterday, today and tomorrow.

**MCC(SCW/EXW/SW/AW/SG)** James G. Pinsky  
Editor-in-Chief, *Seabee* Magazine

### Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...

Look for these boxes inside to see how your comments were applied to content.



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#### EDITORIAL

*SEABEE* Magazine is scheduled quarterly by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Public Affairs Office from the historic Washington Navy Yard, "the Quarterdeck of the Navy." Our readership consists of Active and Reserve Seabees and Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) officers and their families, as well as veterans, retirees and the general public. Letters and electronic mail are welcome on all Seabee-related topics and, if published, are subject to editing for length and clarity. Written and photographic submissions that show Active and Reserve Seabees are strongly encouraged. We prefer to receive all written and photographic submissions by e-mail to [seabeesmagazine@navy.mil](mailto:seabeesmagazine@navy.mil). Images should include captions and be unmodified; digital files should measure at least 300dpi at 5x7 inches. All submissions must include the author's full name, rank/rate, duty contact telephone number(s) and e-mail address. Submissions by regular postal mail are strongly discouraged due to security precautions that may damage fragile contents. If necessary, send all postal mail to:

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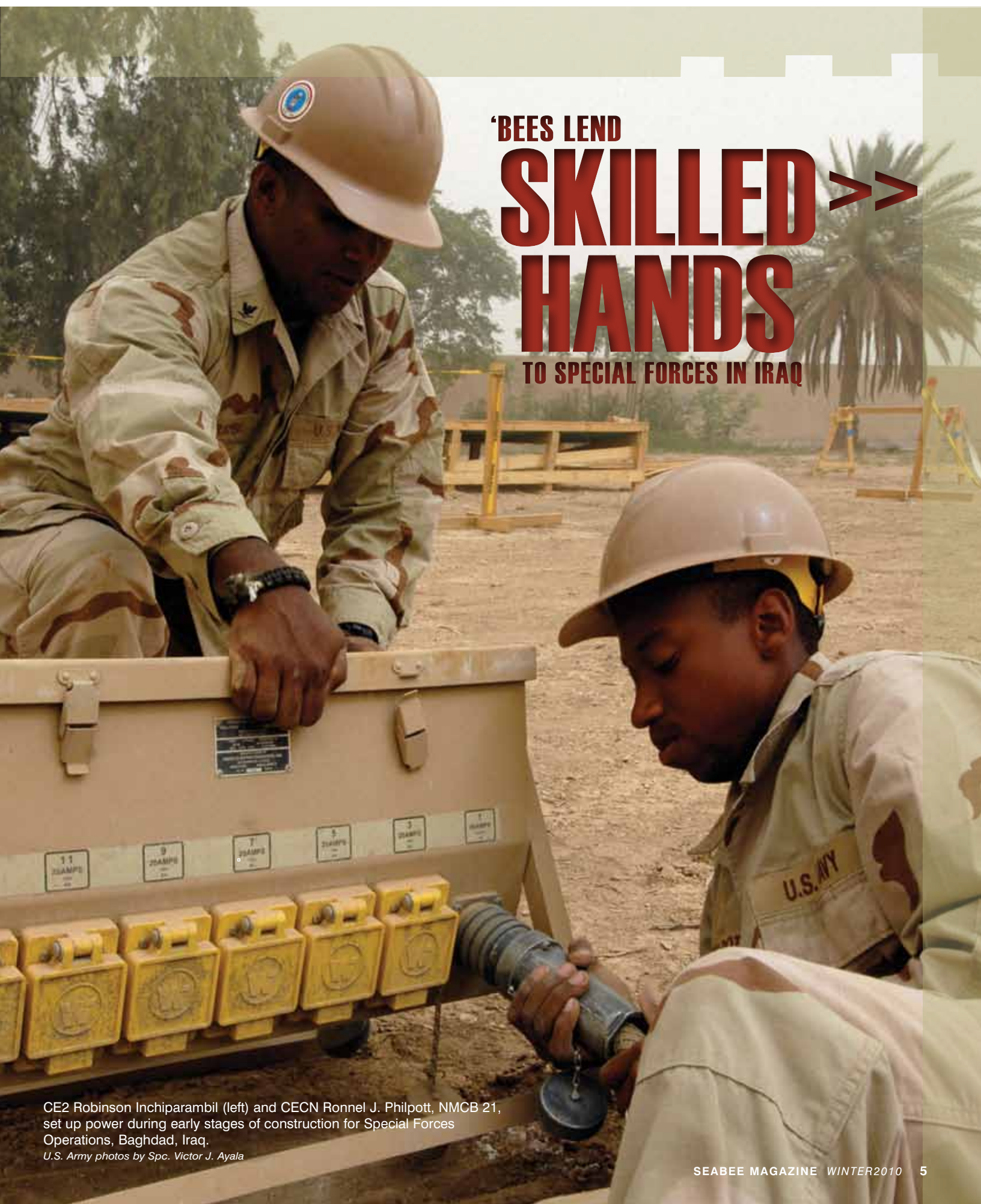
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'BEES LEND

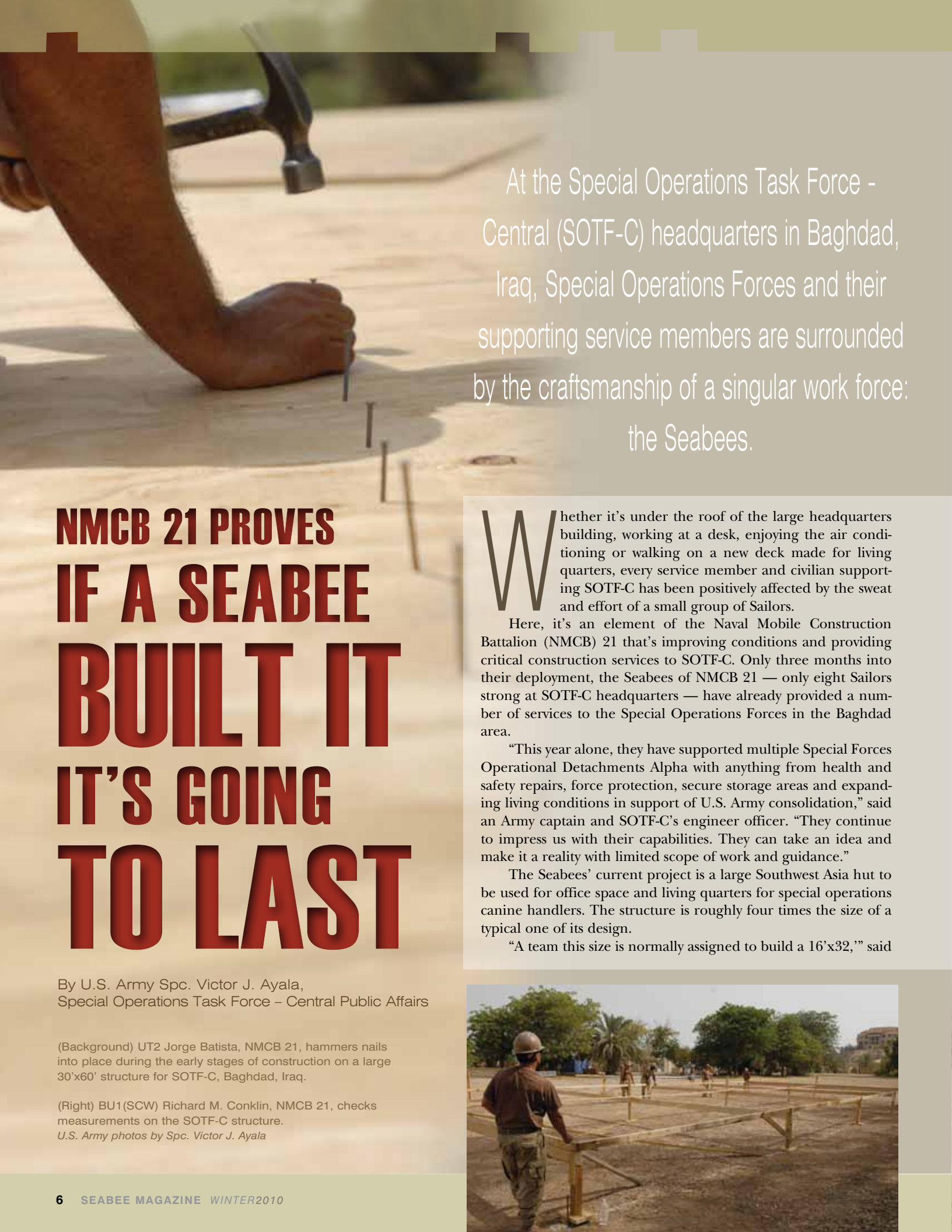
# SKILLED HANDS

TO SPECIAL FORCES IN IRAQ



CE2 Robinson Inchiparambil (left) and CECN Ronnel J. Philpott, NMCB 21, set up power during early stages of construction for Special Forces Operations, Baghdad, Iraq.

U.S. Army photos by Spc. Victor J. Ayala



At the Special Operations Task Force - Central (SOTF-C) headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, Special Operations Forces and their supporting service members are surrounded by the craftsmanship of a singular work force: the Seabees.

# NMCB 21 PROVES IF A SEABEE BUILT IT IT'S GOING TO LAST

By U.S. Army Spc. Victor J. Ayala,  
Special Operations Task Force – Central Public Affairs

(Background) UT2 Jorge Batista, NMCB 21, hammers nails into place during the early stages of construction on a large 30'x60' structure for SOTF-C, Baghdad, Iraq.

(Right) BU1(SCW) Richard M. Conklin, NMCB 21, checks measurements on the SOTF-C structure.

U.S. Army photos by Spc. Victor J. Ayala

Whether it's under the roof of the large headquarters building, working at a desk, enjoying the air conditioning or walking on a new deck made for living quarters, every service member and civilian supporting SOTF-C has been positively affected by the sweat and effort of a small group of Sailors.

Here, it's an element of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 21 that's improving conditions and providing critical construction services to SOTF-C. Only three months into their deployment, the Seabees of NMCB 21 — only eight Sailors strong at SOTF-C headquarters — have already provided a number of services to the Special Operations Forces in the Baghdad area.

"This year alone, they have supported multiple Special Forces Operational Detachments Alpha with anything from health and safety repairs, force protection, secure storage areas and expanding living conditions in support of U.S. Army consolidation," said an Army captain and SOTF-C's engineer officer. "They continue to impress us with their capabilities. They can take an idea and make it a reality with limited scope of work and guidance."

The Seabees' current project is a large Southwest Asia hut to be used for office space and living quarters for special operations canine handlers. The structure is roughly four times the size of a typical one of its design.

"A team this size is normally assigned to build a 16'x32,'" said







UT2 Jorge Batista (far left) and CECN Ronnel J. Philpott, NMCB 21, help guide EO3 Paul C. L. Redden as he transports materials on the job site, Baghdad, Iraq.

Senior Chief Builder (SCW) Henry P. Aviles. “And we’re dealing with a 30’x60.’ Despite the size of the project, the Seabees are highly motivated.”

The eight-Sailor team is part of a larger unit detached from its parent battalion. The detachment is currently assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Arabian Peninsula (CJSOTF-AP) in Balad, and numbers about 100. The main body of NMCB 21 is currently serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan, while another detachment is serving in Kuwait. BUCS Aviles’s team is one of several spread throughout Iraq to aid CJSOTF-AP’s subordinate task forces.

The team makes up for its minimal size with its diversity, employing four builders, two construction electricians, an equipment operator and a utilitiesman. The team hardly considers its size a problem.

“It’s proving helpful because it forces members of the team to work outside of their respective specialties, and broadens their experience,” said junior team member Construction Electrician Constructionman Ronnel J. Philpott, NMCB 21.

Early in the construction of the team’s big project, there will be very little work for an electrician or utilitiesman, but no manpower can be wasted. During each phase of the construction, individual members of the team will have to rise to the occasion and lead the others in their specialty.

“We divide into smaller crews and the senior in each crew

is the leader,” said Utilitiesman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Jorge Batista, former Navy aviation technician. Then as certain jobs demand certain expertise they will fall back and help support.

“It really helps me see the big picture as we all do our part,” UT2 Batista said.

Another benefit is their shared background, says Batista.

NMCB 21 is a Navy Reserve unit out of Lakehurst, N.J., and the members of the team are all from New Jersey or New York.

“It helps us relate and communicate,” Batista said. “We have that New York vocabulary and similar experiences.”

Aviles notes that any group working together so hard and so closely will always come together.

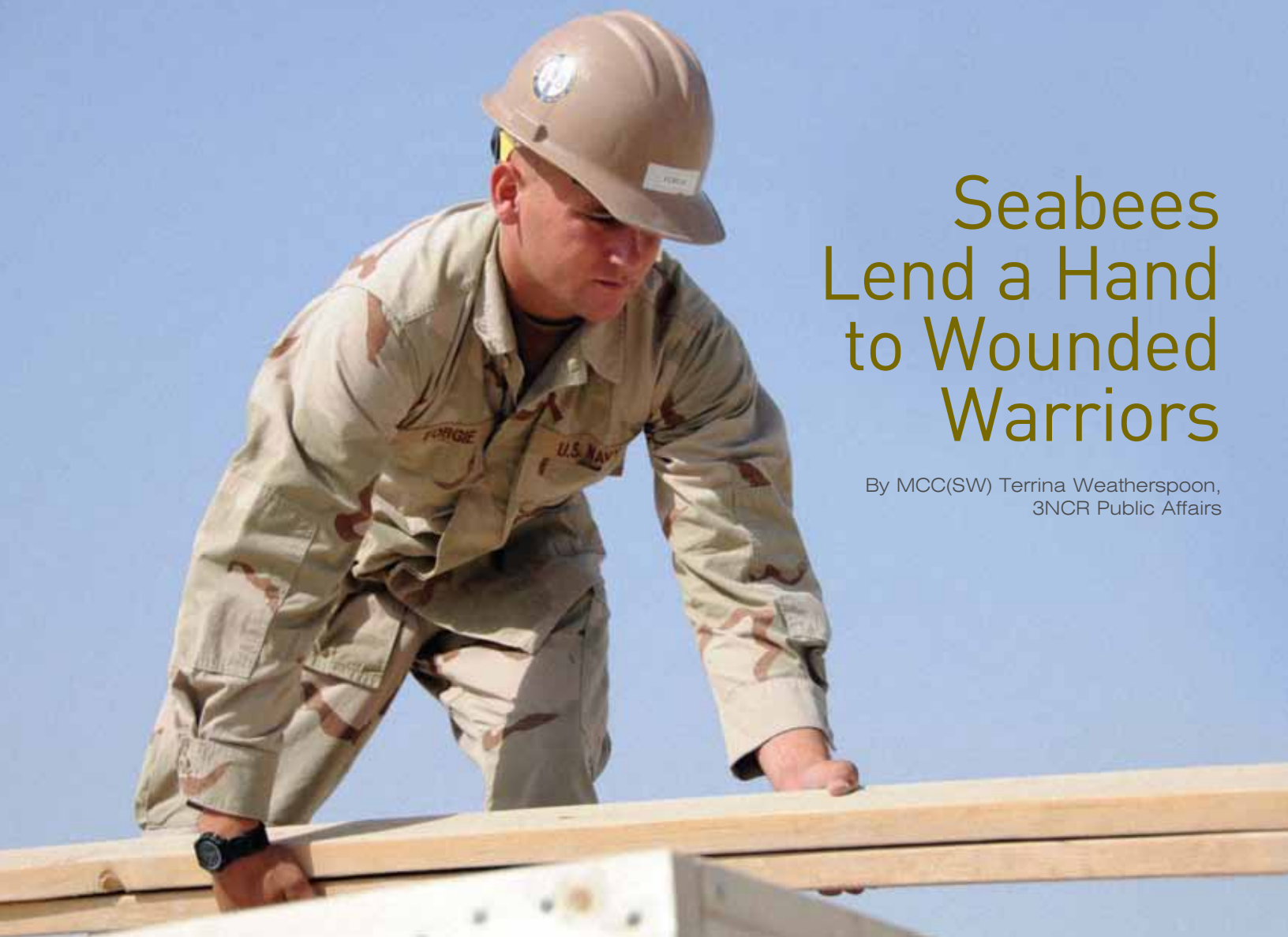
In addition to the large job already underway, the Seabees are often called to help with smaller projects on the side, such as installing air conditioning and decks for new living quarters.

Above all things, however, NMCB 21 is promoting safety and quality of work. This consistent, responsible and reliable work ethic is something SOTF-C’s commander, an Army lieutenant colonel, has noticed over the course of his six deployments to support the SOTF.

“The Seabees are some of the most energetic troops I have witnessed during my six rotations in Iraq. You present them a problem and they find the solution,” he said. “And you can trust that if a Seabee built it, it’s going to last. They’re absolutely impressive.”

UT2 Jorge Batista, NMCB 21, makes precise measurements at the job site, Baghdad, Iraq.





# Seabees Lend a Hand to Wounded Warriors

By MCC(SW) Terrina Weatherspoon,  
3NCR Public Affairs

BUCN Kevin Forgie, NMCB 18, offloads lumber for the deck at the wounded warrior unit, Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan.

*Photos by MCC(SW) Terrina Weatherspoon*

“My buddy went to jump over this two-and-a-half foot wide ditch carrying a 60-pound pack,” said Army Staff Sgt. Brian R. Green. “He didn’t make it. So a couple of guys were helping him out of it. As soon as he lifted his left leg...BOOM! The blast threw me 20 feet and I took a lot of shrapnel to the face. My buddy lost his leg.”

That’s how Staff Sgt. Green, a member of HHC 1/66 Armor Company out of Fort Carson, Col., currently deployed to Arghanda, Afghanistan, ended up at the wounded warrior compound, Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. He is one of many who will spend anywhere from a couple of days to weeks at the compound, either recovering before an eventual return to the fight or preparing for redeployment back to the states.

The wounded warrior compound isn’t much. It’s a couple of tents set up here and there, identified most times only by a heart on the door. There is usually one tent for sleeping and another set up as a day room. Since the occupants of these tents continue to change on a weekly and sometimes daily basis, the amenities are scarce. Often injured service members arrive with nothing more than the clothes on their back. Other times, depending on their injuries, they don’t even arrive with that.

So when Seabees from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (3NCR) heard there wasn’t a plan in place to make these men and

women more comfortable, they decided to take matters into their own hands – literally.

“It was Legalman Senior Chief Erin Meadows, U.S. Forces - Afghanistan (South) Staff Judge Advocate’s Office Paralegal, who brought it to our attention that the wounded warriors needed help from the Seabees,” said Senior Chief Equipment Operator (SCW) Ed Schoen, 3NCR Operations Department.

“I first learned of their needs about a month ago when my Senior Enlisted Advisor, a Marine Corps sergeant major, brought the various wounded warrior groups to my attention,” said LNCS Meadows. “I knew I could get friends and family from home to send care packages and provide support. And I knew I could ask members from the Chiefs Mess, who also happened to be Seabees, to help out immediately.”

“When we went around visiting the various wounded warrior groups we noticed right away that there were things we could build that would make their lives here easier,” said EOCS Schoen. “We decided the first thing we could build them was a covered deck. So we went to work to make it happen.”

Schoen enlisted the help of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB)18 whose members were able to prefabricate a deck in their compound, and then move it over to the wounded warrior unit.



"I was surprised to see how easy everything came together and how many people showed up to help," said Chief Gunners Mate (SCW) Jack Thompson, armory chief for the regiment. "It was a great opportunity for the Seabees to do what they do best – improve quality of life."

"After witnessing and helping with the building of the deck, we've proven that the Seabees and the Chiefs Mess are an invaluable resource, and we've committed to the continued support of these great warriors," said Meadows.

To date, besides the deck, more than a dozen care packages have been sent for the wounded warrior groups on KAF. Additionally, a lot of items have been donated by various groups on KAF. Schoen even went and independently purchased a new Xbox for one of the groups to enjoy.

"I've already received feedback that the members absolutely love the system," said Meadows.

"Recently I visited with one of the groups for the first time. I was speaking with a Soldier and he was telling me about his battlefield injury as he was showing me his current living arrangements," said Meadows. "I stopped, shook his hand and thanked him for his service. I was stunned by his experiences and did not know what else to say. In turn, he was shocked that I was thanking him.

"He said, 'Senior Chief, you are serving, also!' I was dumbfounded that he would equate his service – in a direct combat role – to mine. I reminded him that I am here in a capacity to support our Soldiers on the battlefield and that my service was second to Soldiers such as himself. Needless to say, this warrior saw no difference between us, and I was incredibly humbled."

**"Not only am I still alive and intact, but I also get to leave here with the knowledge that if someone else in my unit is injured and ends up at KAF, they will be taken care of."**

– U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian R. Green

Meadows and Schoen, along with the support of the Chiefs Mess and the Seabees, plan to stop by the wounded warrior units often and see how they can help.

"They are always welcome," said Army Sgt. John Mazurek, the noncommissioned officer in charge of wounded warrior units. "I haven't met anyone out there so willing to go out of their way for any of us."

"We have already committed to building these warriors some much-needed shelving, as well as completing deck projects in other wounded warrior units," said Schoen.

"We don't just want to build them a few necessities," said Logistics Specialist (SCW/EXW) Ernie Sierra, NMCB 18 supply chief. "We want to make them the envy of the base."

"I feel pretty lucky," said Green. "Not only am I still alive and intact, but I also get to leave here with the knowledge that if someone else in my unit is injured and ends up at KAF, they will be taken care of."



Seabees from 3NCR and NMCB 18 transport a deck for a wounded warrior unit, Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan.



# Seabee Surgeon's Skills Critical in Saving Afghan Boy

By MCC Leif Herrgesell, NMCB 18 Public Affairs



CAPT (Dr.) Donald Bittner, NMCB 18  
Photo by UT3 Ta Vuong

Winning hearts and minds across cultures can come in many forms. Most often it happens when a custom is observed or simple words of greeting are exchanged. Service members know these efforts are as critical to saving Afghans as fighting the Taliban. There are days, however, when words aren't enough and lifesaving becomes dramatic and literal.

One such day occurred this past summer for 12-year-old Ali Omar\*. Ali was working with his family in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. Like any other day, Ali and his family were working hard to simply feed themselves and still have enough left over to sell. Ali's father grows wheat and almonds.

Ali was feeding wheat into a 25-horsepower threshing machine when the wind blew his clothing, causing it to get caught in the thresher. His arms were pulled into the equipment used to separate the grain from the hulls after it has been harvested. Ali's father instantly struggled to pull him free, but even his immediate action wasn't fast enough. Unable to free his son, he disengaged the machine by removing a pin and releasing Ali's arms. Within seconds, Ali's flesh was removed from both his hands and arms.

Ali's family quickly encountered a U.S. Army patrol. A nine-line report (emergency information with location) was called in by the patrol and Ali was rushed by helicopter to a ROLE 3 medical facility. Since the initial facility was unable to provide the level of reconstructive care Ali required, he was transported to the ROLE 3 located at Kandahar Air Field (KAF).

CAPT Donald Bittner, an orthopedic surgeon serving with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 18, was working at the KAF Multinational Medical Unit. He is a drilling reservist from Orange County, Calif., and an associate professor of surgery at the University of California-Irvine working at St. Jude Hospital. He specializes in hand and upper extremity corrective and reconstructive surgery.

When he deployed, CAPT Bittner figured he would work on the occasional broken hand, crushed foot and other combat-related injuries. Saving the arms of a child caught in harvesting equipment wasn't something he had planned for; but that didn't mean he wasn't ready.

"This certainly isn't the kind of patient you anticipate in a war zone," said Bittner. "I see this kind of accident at home and, of course, we are better prepared to manage this level of trauma in the states. But to be able to save a child who would otherwise have died is why we become surgeons – this is what medicine is about."

Bittner and two teams comprised of four other surgeons and specialists from Canada and the United States worked for more than eight hours to save Ali's arms. The surgery was long and intense as the two teams reconstructed the boy's mangled arms. In the process, the teams reattached muscle, reconnected arteries and grafted skin in order to restore blood flow and rebuild Ali's arms.

Despite the five surgeries Ali will have to endure to rebuild his arms and the follow-on skin grafts, the prognosis is very good, said Bittner, who continues to see his young patient. One day he tested Ali's fine motor skills by asking the boy to pinch a \$2 bill between his thumb and forefinger. With a smile he told Ali if he could do it, he could keep the money. Ali indicated he would prefer Bittner's watch. Nevertheless, the boy was able to pinch the money, said Bittner with a laugh.

For CAPT Bittner, he and the other medical professionals at KAF ROLE 3 made a real difference to a local boy and his family, in a land torn by 35 years of constant warfare.

*\*Ali Omar's name has been fictionalized for this story.*

Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says... "Seabee Magazine is a reminder of the fact that we are all part of something bigger."

# NMCB 18 Builds “FOB in a Box”

By Michael Reinsch, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command

**N**aval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 18 recently built a forward operating base (FOB) near Kandahar Airfield on Lindsey II to support NATO forces and the mission in Afghanistan. Actually, it was an “FOB in a box” – shipping containers with all the tents, showers and construction materials needed to set up a forward operating base remotely.

The front half of the base was built from structures put in place approximately five years ago by local nationals and then abandoned. Seabees assessed the buildings and began to remodel each structure, working 10-14 hours each day to complete the project. NMCB 18 ‘Bees and local Afghans worked for four weeks making concrete bunkers and platforms for the buildings.

The “FOB in a box” will serve as housing for service members staying on Lindsey II.

“We do our job so that everybody else can do their job,” said CE3 Eric Mueller, NMCB 18.

BU2 Rosendo Gudino, NMCB 18, nails plywood from an “FOB in a box” in a building on Camp Lindsey II, Kandahar, Afghanistan.

*International Security Assistance Force photo  
by MCC Jason Carter*



# NMCB 5 Erects K-Span in the Desert





(Opposite and below) Seabees attached to NMCB 5 erect a K-Span building, Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.  
*Photos by MC2 Ace Rheume*



*Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...* "Include more photos of [Seabee] projects happening in real time."

# NMCBs 18, 40 Clear Way for COP, Power Plant

By Michael Reinsch, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command

A Russian silo built during Soviet-occupied Afghanistan was recently razed by Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCBs) 18 and 40, with help from the U.S. Army's 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 557<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company.

Seabees flattened the grain-processing silo, abandoned after Soviet occupation, in preparation for a future 10 mega-watt power plant and a Combat Operation Post (COP) on site in Kandahar City, Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

Once completed, the power plant will provide electricity to the western side of Kandahar, Afghanistan. The COP will house Soldiers from the 122<sup>nd</sup> Infantry to support their mission in and around Kandahar.

The 557<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company assisted the 'Bees with the demo work to finish the project earlier than scheduled.



Seabees from NMCBs 18 and 40, and Soldiers from U.S. Army 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 557<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company, remove rubble from a demolished building with heavy construction equipment, Russian Silo Combat Outpost, Kandahar, Afghanistan. *International Security Assistance Force photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Samuel Padilla*

## Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...

62 percent of respondents deemed overseas operations and the Global War on Terrorism as "very important" to cover in *Seabee* Magazine.





(From left to right) SW1 David Banaszak and BU3 Jonathan Burns, NMCB 40, fill sandbags for force protection measures, Russian Silo Combat Outpost, Kandahar, Afghanistan.

*International Security Assistance Force photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Samuel Padilla*



# THREE TIMES A SAILOR TWICE A CHIEF



CEC(SCW/SW) Orrin T. Greene participates  
in an exercise in Afghanistan.

*Photo by MCC(SW) Terrina Weatherspoon*

Getting selected for chief petty officer is tough. And it's only the beginning. With selection results comes induction and with induction comes the opportunity for selectees to prove to themselves and their mess they are ready for the responsibility that comes with the golden anchors. It's a training experience that chiefs are proud to say they went through – once.

However, it is a process Chief Construction Electrician (SCW/SW) Orrin T. Greene is proud to say he went through – twice.

When, at the time, Electrician's Mate 1<sup>st</sup> Class Greene was selected for chief in 1989 with only eight years in, he knew it wasn't going to be easy, but he was ready. He grew up in a Navy family where it was expected that he would join the military and succeed; and he had done both.

As a young chief he said he was confident in his abilities to sort out complicated situations and give solid direction. He loved his job and was having the time of his life.

However, just three years later, with one question from his son, Greene saw his world reprioritize.

"He asked me if I was going to get a chance to visit him that year," said CEC Greene, currently deployed to Afghanistan with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 18. "I knew at that point it was time to stop mentoring Sailors and start mentoring my own son."

Greene was discharged from the Navy in 1992 after 11 years of service.

"I know I made the right choice," said Greene. "In the fall after I got out of the military, my son and I went hunting together for elk. I realized that day I wasn't really out there to hunt – I was out there to spend time with my son and recover some of the moments I had lost. I didn't shoot an elk that day, but instead left with something much more valuable – a better relationship with my boy."

In 1993, about a year later, Greene enlisted in the Navy Reserves. They weren't taking any electrician's mates at the time so Greene was given the option to come back in as a construction electrician with the Seabees. But instead of a chief, he would have to enlist as a first class petty officer.

"It was a very humbling experience. But as a chief, we learn that we need to be humbled at times," said Greene. "I had to realize that it wasn't about what was on my collar. It was about serving my country. It wasn't about me; it was about the needs of the Navy at the time."

Eventually, even as a reservist, full-time civilian life won out again. He transferred into the Inactive Ready Reserve for four years, and in 1999 he was discharged from the Navy for the second time.

"Civilian life had just become too busy," said Greene. "The economy was doing well and I was intent on going back to school."

And he did. He earned a Ph.D.

"Greene is humble," said Chief Mass Communications Specialist Leif Herrgesell, public affairs officer, NMCB 18. "Very few people know that he has a Ph.D. He never talks about it. He's a steadying influence and very level headed."

It was his level head he was using when in 2009, almost 10 years after being discharged from the Navy, he decided to join for a third time.

"There was a program in place that allowed you to rejoin with your same rank and rate if it hadn't been more than 10 years and if you were still actively in a job that corresponded with your rate," said

Greene. "So I was back in the Navy as a CE1."

Within two months of being back in the reserves, his command informed him that they would be deploying within the year.

"My wife said she thought we were past this, and honestly I thought we were as well," said Greene.

Nevertheless, he began to gear up to deploy with NMCB 18. In July while in Gulfport, Miss., he heard the news that he had been selected for chief.

"It was such a great feeling. Like I was home," said Greene.

"Greene's level of commitment to the Navy and the mess were humbling," said MCC Herrgesell. "He didn't tell anyone about his history with the Navy. Very few people were aware of his background. That speaks volumes about the kind of person he is. He never bragged or complained."

Once his story got out, the respect for "Genuine Chief Select" Greene grew.

"I do feel like there is an underlying respect for my situation, not just among the mess but also among the other selectees," said Greene. "The mess knows my situation and I think it's difficult for them to figure out how to treat me, but they respect my position. I wanted to go through the process again. I wanted to be able to bond with my fellow selectees. And I wanted to see things from their perspective."

"I know that our mess is very proud of him, not just for his past accomplishments, but also for the humility it takes to go through induction again, and not degrade the journey and the training for his fellow selectees," said Herrgesell.

"We are definitely proud to have him go through the process with us," said Chief Information Systems Technician Teresa Alavarez, automated data processing chief, 3<sup>rd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (3NCR). "He is able to provide insight and guidance behind closed doors. We commend and respect him, and he upholds the Navy traditions and keeps them dear to his heart. But he won't

let us read his charge book!"

A charge book is something each selectee is required to carry around. It is essentially a notebook containing wisdom and guidance from Genuine Chiefs. Greene is simply adding to the book he started more than 20 years ago.

"I'm glad I'm going back through the process," said Greene. "There are positive changes being made across the board and we are getting more in line with current policies. And besides, there is always more to learn. There is a takeaway from every situation. I'm able to stand outside the mess and see what is really coming out of there, and I'm able to go behind closed doors with the selectees and see what they are really gaining from the experience. I'm able to offer them a level of calm."

"I have to honestly say I'm not sure I'm as good a man as him," said Herrgesell. "I'd like to think that I'd volunteer to go through induction again, but not having walked in his shoes I can't honestly say I would. That is truly what sets him apart. This guy would be a master chief by now if not for the breaks in service and coming into the reserves without his anchor."

"Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West was two companies behind me in boot camp," said Greene. "My brother is a retired master chief. I know what I would have been able to accomplish, but honestly, I'm a chief twice over, and I'm pretty proud of that."

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# SEABEES BUILD YOUTH BARRACKS IN THE PHILIPPINES

By LT Tyler Scharar, NMCB 11



It's not every day that an E-5 has the opportunity to lead his own detached unit of Seabees in a combat environment. But that's just what Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Craig Kresge accomplished during two weeks at Task Force Headquarters, Cota Bato City, Philippines.

As with all Seabee movements, logistics played a vital part. With size, weight and equipment defueling restrictions for aircraft movements, the four-man team loaded its pick-up truck and joined a five-hour convoy to the Philippine Army Base, Camp Siongco.

The team was received by Task Force personnel, who had already procured local materials for the project. As the team surveyed the construction site, they met their new counterparts in the project: 524<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, Philippine Army. The weeklong combined project built eight military obstacles to be used by U.S. and Armed Forces of the Philippines' training groups including barbed wire low-crawl, hurdles, suspended rope crossing and a wall climb. With limited tools and equipment, learning local construction practices was necessary.

"The AFP constructionmen formed the loose rocks and sand into a volcano-like cone, and then just dumped the cement in the center and began mixing, right there on the dirt," explained Steelworker Constructionman Apprentice David Smith.

As a wheelbarrow was filled for transport, the AFP crew leader would seek out Builder Constructionman Apprentice Timothy Rogers and sarcastically state, "Now, we need a driver," which BUCA Rogers helped out with gladly.

Construction Electrician 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Leroy Cook shared his time on the obstacle course with other minor repairs and improvements around the camp. Utilitiesman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SCW) Charlie King flew in for a few days to install water meters and develop a scope of work and materials list for repairs to a remote team house on a nearby base. During a visit by NMCB 11 Detail Philippines Officer-in-Charge LT Tyler Scharar, the Task Force Commander summed it up: "There's no question about it. These Seabees go to bed everyday knowing they put in a real day's work."



BU2 Luke Johnson (far right) helps Philippine Marines staple thatched siding to the youth barracks, Cota Bato City, Philippines.



**Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...**55 percent of respondents said  
*Seabee* Magazine increased understanding of Seabee roles and missions within the CNO's Maritime Strategy.



BU3(SCW) Nicholas Garand (left), Seabee Squad Two, and Philippine Marine Sgt. Jonnifer Taborada, MBLT 6, measure an opening for a window for the youth barracks, Cota Bato City, Philippines.

*Photos by MC2 Terrence Siren*

# ...IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

## Seabees Improve Conditions at Local Costa Rican Schools

By SW2 Anthony Rizzo, CBMU 202



SWCN Linzdie Bicknell, NMCB 7, embarked aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7), welds pipes together for a new fence at a local school, Limon, Costa Rica, during *Continuing Promise 2010*.

Photo by MC2 Jonathon E. Davis

Seabees embarked aboard the multipurpose, amphibious ship USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) completed building renovation projects at Hone Creek and Westfalia elementary schools as part of *Continuing Promise 2010*, a humanitarian civic assistance mission in Central and South America. During the mission, Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 and Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 202 worked with partner nation teams to provide engineering assistance to eight nations.

The 'Bees were greeted with open arms when they arrived to work on the local schools to help enhance student education.

"The people of Hone Creek Elementary greeted my project crew with a reception, and I was honored," said Builder 3<sup>rd</sup> Class

Brandon Kinsey, NMCB 7 project crew leader.

"It was really great to visit this country and offer our services by installing lights and receptacles, and repairing a roof," said Construction Electrician 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Aaron Rudd, NMCB 7. "I got to see the children of Hone Creek get a jump start on their education, and it felt good to know that I was able to help them."

The improvements will also allow the children to play safely.

"Knowing this will allow the parents and teachers to feel more at peace while the children play safely is a good feeling," said Hull Maintenance Technician 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Shane Hutzenbiler. "I felt grateful that we had the opportunity to assist the kids of Westfalia Elementary just by building a fence around their school."



## NMCB 7 Completes School Renovations in Guyana

Seabees assigned to Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 202, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 and Marines from Special Purpose, Marine Air Ground Task Force, embarked aboard the USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7), recently completed multiple school renovations in Guyana during a *Continuing Promise 2010* community service event. Work included playground equipment construction, including a new basketball court, and school grounds repairs.

Service personnel embarked aboard *Iwo Jima* are working with partner nation teams to provide engineering assistance to eight countries.



UT2 Cody Weitena, CBMU 202, levels a basketball hoop during a *Continuing Promise 2010* engineering community service event, New Amsterdam, Guyana, Oct. 25.

Photo by MC2 Jonathon E. Davis



This story came to *Seabee* Magazine via Facebook!

# From Alaska to Okinawa

AN ORIGINAL SEABEE REFLECTS

By M. Alberto Rivera

Photos courtesy of U.S. Navy Seabee Museum,  
Naval History and Heritage Command

Dutch Harbor, c. 1942

**L**ike many young men of his generation, 18-year-old Ronald A. Kozak answered the call of duty after Pearl Harbor was attacked. He enlisted in the Navy in 1942.

The Seabees, a brand-new outfit in the Navy, were in dire need of men and, according to Kozak, “We were at war and at that time all enlistees in the Navy were assigned to the Seabees, at least where I enlisted on Church Street in New York. The Seabees were new to the Navy so they needed all the manpower they could get, regardless of age or experience. I do not regret at all the fact that I was put in the Seabees. I’m proud of it.”

After completing boot camp at Camp Braddock, Norfolk, Va., Kozak and his fellow new recruits went to Gulfport, Miss., for advanced training. Then, Kozak went on to serve in the 79<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion (NCB).

The Aleutian Islands Campaign is an often overlooked part of WWII history. Alaska – still a territory at the time – was a battleground. And as Gen. Billy Mitchell said before Congress in 1935, “... whoever holds Alaska will hold the world.”

On June 3, 1942, a Japanese invasion force 8,000 strong, attacked and took control of Unalaska Island. In the following days they repeated this action on Kiska and Attu islands. The Japanese had designs to launch attacks against the West Coast of the United States from these bases.

The 79<sup>th</sup> NCB unit was shipped to Port Hueneme, Calif., where Kozak and 1,100 other ‘Bees caught the USS *Chaumont* (AP-5) and headed north. They would become the maintenance battalion for the Naval Air Station and Naval Base, Kodiak, Alaska.

“In 1943 part of our battalion was sent with the Marines to secure that island. They sure did,” said Kozak. “The Aleutian Islands, being part of Alaska, were one of our main defenses to the West Coast of the United States. If the Japanese ever gained control of those islands, in no time they would invade the mainland of this country. We had to make sure they didn’t.

“No matter where our duties took us we always had to carry the .30 calibre carbine rifle,” he said. “We built roads on the sides of mountains, and helped maintain the Naval Air Station and its runways so our planes could keep up their constant air watch on that part of the Pacific. We maintained the whole naval base from electricity to everything else. We had to be there or the Japanese would.”

*Seabee* Magazine Readership Survey Says...44 percent of readers feel historical features are “very important.”





(Above) In the barracks, c. 1943  
(Right) Seabee-built camp at Adak, 1942



May 1943 saw an 18-day battle for Attu Island. U.S. forces engaged the well dug-in Japanese, many already battle-hardened from time spent in Manchuria. The fighting was grim. Of the 3,000 or so Japanese troops on Attu Island, only 28 were taken prisoner.

On Aug. 15, an Allied invasion force landed on Kiska. The units were comprised of American and Canadian troops. They found the island abandoned. Under the cover of fog, the Japanese left, believing their position to be vulnerable as Attu had been.

Kozak spent 17 months in the Aleutians before returning to the states on 30 days' leave. He then shipped off to Camp Shoemaker in California where intense training began for battle in the Pacific. After spending some time deployed to Saipan, Kozak's next fight was Okinawa.

Okinawa is still remembered as one of the bloodiest battles recorded – ever. It took nearly three months to secure the island. Allied forces were subjected to ongoing fighting from a fierce and determined enemy, as well as heavy rains.

"If I recall," said Kozak, "when we landed on Okinawa the Army was about a mile to our left and the Marines about a mile to our right. We went inland about a mile when suddenly all Hell broke loose. Thank God for our Marine training; we were able to bring that battle to a successful close. Then we set up our base in the hills. Even after the island was secured we still had bombings, but we were getting ready for the invasion of Japan."

"Nature wasn't helpful either," said Kozak. "Monsoon rains wreaked havoc, turning the battlefield into soup."

The island was secured June 21, 1945. Everyone's attention turned to training for the invasion of Japan.

"Yes, we suffered some casualties on Okinawa, but thank God President Harry Truman decided to drop the A-bombs. That decision saved thousands of American lives and wounded," Kozak said. "Just let me add that the Seabees during WWII in both the Pacific and Europe, while under fire from the enemy, accomplished a great deal to end that war. And to this day, they deserve all the honor they proudly earned. Once again they not only proved 'Can Do,' but sure did and continue to do so."

*M. Alberto Rivera served in NMCB 40's Public Affairs Office in the early 1990s. He currently lives in Cocoa, Fla., and is a contributing writer to several publications.*



NAVY HOSPITAL CORPSMEN  
**Vital to the Mission**



A story circulated in a mass e-mail to service members throughout Afghanistan. It told of the 4<sup>th</sup> Squad, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Company I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines' dismounted security patrol in the vicinity of Route Joanne in northern Marjah, Afghanistan. As the patrol moved north along a canal toward the route, it came under a heavy barrage of medium machine gunfire from a series of fighting positions dug out of a compound wall, 250 meters northeast of the squad.

Almost immediately, one of the unit members was shot through the lower back. Seeing that his teammate was down, Seaman Hospital Corpsman Matthew Dishmon ran across 25 meters of open, exposed terrain to reach the casualty. He dragged the injured Marine to a covered position despite enemy tracer rounds passing within inches of his head, arms and chest.

Once behind cover, HMSN Dishmon assessed the casualty's injuries and immediately determined the service member had sustained significant trauma to both lungs and was losing blood at a rapid rate. Working in total darkness and under continued enemy fire, Dishmon worked rapidly to apply pressure dressings to the Marine's wounds before administering two needle decompressions to his chest and administering an IV. In spite of the casualty's critical condition and significant blood loss, Dishmon managed to keep him stable for more than 40 minutes before the medical evacuation helicopter arrived. Upon its arrival, Dishmon assisted in carrying the Marine more than 100 meters to reach the landing zone.

The impact corpsmen are having in the field is profound, and not just with the Marines. Corpsmen are incredibly significant to another group of hard-charging men and women: the Seabees.

Seabees support a myriad of missions around the world, and Navy Hospital Corpsmen serve right alongside them, continually ensuring that they are medically fit to accomplish the mission.

Corpsmen serve at every level of the Seabee organization. They deploy with Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCBs) and Naval Construction Regiments (NCRs). They man, train and equip Seabee units in the Seabee Readiness Groups (SRGs) and provide oversight of these units at the Naval Construction Division level.

"Being a Seabee Corpsman can be a very challenging position," said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Dan Smith, medical chief for the 3<sup>rd</sup> NCR, Kandahar, Afghanistan. There are more than 500 Seabees attached to battalions. The entire medical department is, on a good day, around 14 people strong."

This equates to one medical officer and at best three independent duty corpsmen, which leaves approximately eight junior corpsmen. A Seabee battalion has all the same administrative responsibility as any other unit, but usually has significantly less medical personnel. While it is true that Seabee units are generally not as fully engaged in kinetic operations as Marine units

may be, their assets can be spread very thin due to OPTEMPO, which can increase stress levels.

Since the start of the troop surge early this year, four Seabee battalions have deployed to Afghanistan. These Seabee battalions can have as many as 16 detachment sites spread across half of the world.

"When you do the math you can see where the shortages are," said HMCS Smith. "What this means is that junior corpsmen are forced to work independently and have to exercise maturity and make decisions that could have a significant impact on someone else's life.

"That is a big responsibility to put on an 18- to 19-year-old E1-E4," he continued. "It is just a part of being a Seabee Corpsman, and in my opinion makes the job a rewarding experience."

But Corpsmen's efforts are never without a degree of danger.

While supporting the expansion of a combat outpost, Hospital Corpsman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Rodney White sustained minor shrapnel injuries during a rocket attack. Despite his own wounds, he continued to treat six Joint Forces patients. With the air quality conditions in the area unfavorable for air evacuation, HM2 White assisted in treating and stabilizing these patients for five hours. He was later treated for his own wounds and returned to duty.

"We had a corpsman at one of the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) take a piece of shrapnel to his buttocks while treating patients," said Smith. "He continued to treat patients even though he was injured. We have a significant amount of corpsmen working out on FOBs independently while being responsible for 30-plus personnel, and they are all risking their own safety for the mission. It's what we do."

And corpsmen aren't just assisting in a medical capacity; they are also lending support to the mission.

Hospital Corpsman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SCW) Catherine Jacobsen recently deployed to Helmand province, Afghanistan, with NMCB 74 and served as the corpsman for 18 Seabees tasked with placing 2,200 meters of triple strand concertina wire. This wire served as an exterior barrier for Camp Leatherneck. Along with her daily duties of caring for the sick and injured, she took the initiative to assist the Seabees with their assignment. Her efforts helped the job get completed two weeks ahead of schedule. For her outstanding teamwork and professionalism she was command advanced to HM2.

Corpsmen such as Jacobsen, White and Dishmon are doing incredible things across the theatre.

Said Chaplain Mike Moreno of junior enlisted efforts, "We need to remember that these men and women are remarkable every day."

*HMCM Robert E. Searles contributed to this article.*



(Above) BUCN Nathan Crowell (right), NMCB 5, receives his annual flu vaccine from HM3(FMF) Orlando Green, Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. Photo by MC2 Ace Rheume

(Opposite) HM2(FMF) Chris Lutton, NMCB 18, treats a young boy outside Combat Outpost Kandalay, Afghanistan.

Photo by MCC(SW) Terrina Weatherspoon

## CAPT Cariello Takes Command of NCBC Gulfport, 20<sup>th</sup> SRG

By NCBC Gulfport Public Affairs



CAPT Louis Cariello makes his remarks after accepting command of NCBC Gulfport and 20<sup>th</sup> SRG from CAPT Ed Brown at a change of command ceremony on board NCBC Gulfport, Miss., Sept. 10.

Photo by MC1(SCW) Demetrius Kennon

CAPT Louis V. Cariello became the 27<sup>th</sup> officer to assume the duties as commanding officer, Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC)/Commander, 20<sup>th</sup> Seabee Readiness Group (SRG), Gulfport, Miss., Sept. 10. CAPT Cariello assumed command from CAPT Ed Brown, who retired after 25 years of naval service following the change of command ceremony.

While in command of NCBC, CAPT Brown led efforts to mobilize and demobilize more than 6,000 reservists, and train and deploy five active and three reserve Seabee battalions to theaters worldwide. He also ensured shipment of more than 120,000 tons of material and equipment in support of the Global War on Terrorism and other operations throughout the world.

Cariello's most recent position was commodore of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (NCR) in Gulfport.

## RDML Brown Makes History...Again

By NAVFAC HQ Public Affairs and Communications

**R**DML Paula C. Brown became the first female Deputy Commander of the First Naval Construction Division and just the second female in the Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) to be promoted to rear admiral during a ceremony at the Seabee Memorial, Arlington, Va., Oct. 2. She relieved RADM Scott A. Weikert, who received his second star and is now the Deputy Commander for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC).

This new assignment caps a series of firsts for RDML Brown, who was also the first female commander of a Seabee regiment in combat.

Family of RDML Paula Brown (center) apply shoulder boards during her promotion ceremony, Seabee Memorial, Arlington, Va.





In memory of a Seabee...

## First Amanda R. Miller Award Presented

By NAVFAC HQ Public Affairs and Communications



The inaugural award honoring Construction Electrician 1<sup>st</sup> Class Amanda R. Miller was presented at the U.S. Army's Prime Power School, Fort Belvoir, Va. CE1 Miller graduated from the Prime Power School in 2008, where she received the "Iron Man" Award for having the highest score of any Soldier or Sailor in her class. Well-respected by her instructors and peers, she often helped fellow students academically and was very active in community service.

Miller was diagnosed with cancer after her graduation and died in April at age 24. Those associated with the school said they

will continue to remember and honor her through this award.

The first Amanda R. Miller Award was presented to Sgt. Alexander Dailey, a four-year Army veteran who graduated from the school as an electrical engineering specialist.

The award is presented to the graduate who best exemplifies Miller's strong character and inspiring values. Criteria include being in the top 50 percent of your class academically, as well as being a team-builder, a leader in physical fitness and active in the community.

*Information compiled from the Belvoir Eagle, Fort Belvoir, Va.*



(Inset) CE1 Amanda R. Miller

(Above) Sgt. Alexander Dailey (right) accepts the first Amanda R. Miller Award



RADM Scott A. Weikert (4<sup>th</sup> from right) recognizes BAE Systems' Mike Gooden on behalf of reserve Seabees.

## RADM Weikert Recognizes Employer Support of Reservists

By Daryl Smith, Public Affairs Officer,  
First Naval Construction Division

RADM Scott A. Weikert recently presented the Patriot Award to BAE Systems' Mike Gooden, systems senior project engineer, on behalf of reserve Seabees. The Patriot Award is an honor created by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) recognizing individuals and companies that provide outstanding patriotic support and cooperation to their employees.

"We rely tremendously on our reserve personnel to be able to train and deploy to support vital U.S. missions around the world," said RADM Weikert. "They could not do this without the outstanding support of their employers, such as BAE, and we truly appreciate everything they do for our personnel."

The Naval Construction Force is made up of approximately 16,600 Seabees. More than half of those 'Bees – 9,000 – are reservists.



# NMCB 74 Khakis Dig Deep for Field Exercise

By MC2 Michael Lindsey, NMCB 74



CDR Richard Hayes III (left), commanding officer, and ENS James Schneider, NMCB 74, move concertina wire into position while setting up a defensive line during the Khaki FTX, Camp Shelby, Miss.

The chiefs and officers of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74 made a huge stride toward readiness during their khaki field training exercise (FTX) at Camp Shelby, Miss. The one-week field exercise gave the “Fearless” leadership the opportunity to develop tactics and technical proficiency, improve teamwork and build camaraderie.

Every NMCB must successfully complete a FTX before deployment to be tested in the following areas: communications; chemical, biological, radiological (CBR) defense; embarkation; and convoy security and patrols. During FTX, Seabees build the camps, defend the lines and conduct the patrols, while the leadership plans, coordinates and leads the operation. However, during Khaki FTX the leadership constructs the camp, defends the lines and conducts patrols on their own.

Fourteen NMCB 74 chief selects joined the Khaki FTX roster merely two days after their selection.

“It’s cool being on this side of the fence actually seeing the officers and the chiefs, even the skipper, digging foxholes and going on 3,300-meter foot patrols,” said Chief Equipment Operator Brian Bellefeuille, NMCB 74. “I plan on bringing this back to Gulfport and letting the troops know that there truly isn’t anything we would have them do that we wouldn’t do ourselves.”

As soon as the khaki platoon arrived on site, they quickly worked together to build the base camp and divide into four squads. For the duration of four days the squads executed four primary exercises: COC operations, defensive operations, convoys and patrols.

Despite the khaki’s leadership positions in the battalion, participants were shown no special treatment. Heavy rains harassed the watchstanders day and night.

“Rain or shine, it doesn’t matter,” said Chief Builder Jeffrey Allgood, NMCB 74 safety officer, from his water-filled fox hole. “This gives us an opportunity as chiefs to hold training with the junior officers so that when we get out in the field, they will know that their chiefs are here, and they can come to us before making decisions.”

According to LTJG Joshua Baker, he and the other khakis either develop or renew their respect for what the junior troops often face in the field.

“This gives us a better perspective as leaders. When we have to tell someone to dig a fighting position who just finished digging six feet down, ‘No this is not exactly right, I want you to move it over here,’ now we physically know what that means,” said LTJG Baker. “When we draw the fire plans, we have to do it right before we start telling them to dig.”





(From left to right) BUCS Shawn Fellows, ENS James Schneider and NCC Jeremy Stalling, NMCB 74, scan their sectors of fire from a defensive fighting position during the battalion's Khaki FTX, Camp Shelby, Miss.

*Photos by MC2 Michael Lindsey*

For several of the chiefs and officers, this was their first time in the field. Chief Navy Counselor Jeremy Stalling, NMCB 74's command career counselor, is one of many who just came on board earlier this year. Without this training they would find themselves leading troops in the field without the wisdom of experience.

"It's been an eye-opening experience to see how everything comes together from the oporders [operational orders] and frag-os [fragmentary orders]. Having never done this, I would have given orders and not known exactly what I was asking," said NCC Stalling. "You don't want to give an order without having been there and having done that yourself."

Khaki FTX builds camaraderie within and between the Chiefs' Mess and Wardroom. Some would say it is an "unofficial" objective of the exercise. The isolated, close-quarters environment of Camp Shelby offers the khakis an opportunity to really get to know each other. For training purposes, the seasoned veterans will usually step aside and challenge the newer guys to step up and take charge.

"This gives us an opportunity as chiefs to hold training with the junior officers so that when we get out in the field, they will know that their chiefs are here, and they can come to us before making decisions."

BUC Jeffrey Allgood, NMCB 74

# 'Bees Hit Boards on Land and Sea

Story and photos by MC2(SW) Mark Logico, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs



While looking through the scope, EA2(SCW) Joab Cowell, NAVFAC Hawaii, uses a dumpy level to survey the dog park construction project, Ford Island, Pearl Harbor.

In Hawaii, the outdoors can be unforgiving for Seabees who work at construction sites under the sun, but Engineering Aide 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SCW) Joab Cowell and Utilitiesman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SCW) Aaron Ness say they welcome it.

In fact, they head outdoors almost every weekend as they grab their surfboards and hit White Plains Beach on the southwest side of the island.

Assigned to Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii, EA2 Cowell and UT2 Ness spend their off-time surfing on the south shores of Oahu. Hawaii is widely regarded as having some of the best surf locations in the world.

Cowell, who used to boogie board in California, started learning to surf long boards when he arrived in Hawaii more than two years ago. Together with his friend Ness, the two have been catching waves on a regular basis at Waikiki, White Plains and Sand Island beaches.

For Cowell, going surfing is about getting out and being free in the ocean.

"You have no cares when you're out there trying to catch a wave," said Cowell. "Everything else about life just goes away. It's relaxing, therapeutic."

Ness, on the other hand, said he benefits from its full-body workout.

"It's good exercise more than anything else," said Ness. "It's definitely exhausting every time I do it, just paddling."

On a regular work day, NAVFAC Hawaii provides maintenance, renovation and construction in and around Joint Base

Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Cowell and Ness recently constructed a dog park as part of a quality of life project on Ford Island.

Cowell has served in the Navy for more than eight years. Before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Cowell had been working out of a civilian engineering firm.

"After Sept. 11 happened, I went to the recruiter to see what I could do to join and help out the country," said Cowell. "At the time, they offered me the engineering aide rate, and it was pretty much a direct transition from what I was doing. It was an easy transition for me, and I'm doing what I love and always wanted to do."

Like Cowell, Ness has served in the Navy for more than seven years. He also knew he wanted to be a Seabee when he met his recruiter.

"Basically, as a Seabee we get to be a little bit of everything," said Ness. "A little bit of construction, a little bit of combat. I wanted to be a Seabee just because Seabees are the jack of all trades. That's basically what was explained to me, and that's what I wanted to be."

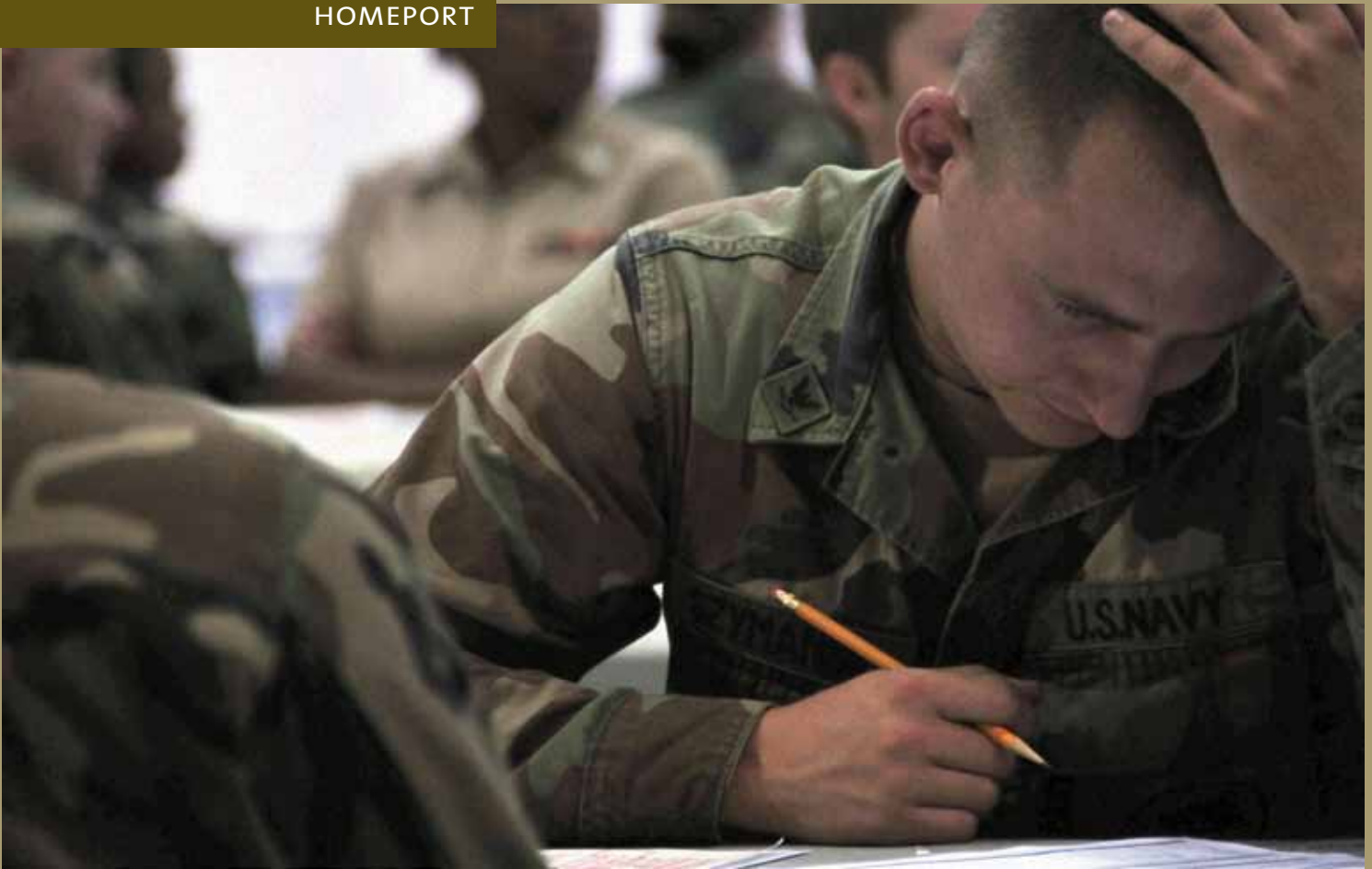
While assigned to NAVFAC Hawaii, Cowell and Ness, together with other Seabees in the command, work more than eight hours a day. Despite that, the two Seabees still consider Hawaii to be an enjoyable shore duty assignment.

"It's laid back and relaxing, definitely a shore duty," said Ness. "They are not lying when they say Hawaii is the best homeport in the Navy."



UT2(SCW) Aaron Ness catches a wave at White Plains Beach, Barber's Point, Hawaii.





## 'Bees Test to Advance

Service members assigned to various commands along the Gulf Coast take the E-5 advancement exam on board NCBC Gulfport, Miss., Sept. 9.

*Photo by MC1(SCW) Demetrius Kennon*



## DISTRACTED DRIVING COSTS LIVES

Be safe behind the wheel.  
Driver inattention is involved in approximately 80 percent of car accidents, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Seabees don't text and drive.

For more information, visit the Naval Safety Center at [www.safetycenter.navy.mil](http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil).



## Perform to Serve Continues to Evolve

By NC1(SCW) Robert A. Wetzel, NAVFAC Headquarters

*Perform to Serve (PTS)* has been constantly evolving since its creation. PTS has gone from first-term Sailors to covering every Sailor with a Soft Expiration of Active Obligated Service (SEAOS) date under 14 years. The biggest change comes with the *PTS* system being integrated with the Fleet RIDE program.

The first step for the *PTS* application process in this new system is to complete the JOIN survey. This survey assesses your work ethic. Questions asked include your preferred work environment, for example outdoors vs. indoors or electronics over administration. After completion of this survey your results are recorded in the Fleet RIDE system. This assigns you a RIDE/JOIN rank which takes every rate in the Navy and sorts them by jobs best fitted to your preferences. This can be helpful to you and the Enlisted Community Manager (ECM) when you think about conversions.

There are some changes to the *PTS* application of which you should be aware. You will only be able to put in an application for either an active duty quota or a reserve quota. You will also be compared with other Sailors/Seabees in your year group, i.e., 1999- the year you joined the Navy. Warfare qualification and Physical Fitness Assessments (PFA) will be considered for *PTS* when looking for the best-qualified member. The number of PFA failures will also be recorded on applications. In addition, evaluations have changed. For personnel E3-E4, three evaluations will be required, and for E5-E6, five. All performance marks – Significant Problems (SP) through Early Promote (EP) – are now accepted to provide a more well-rounded history of your career.

When it's time to put in your *PTS* application in Fleet RIDE you will need to see your Career Counselor. So when is it time? All Sailors will have an application in the system 15 months prior to their SEAOS. There are some reasons that you may need to apply sooner. These may include your Projected Rotation Date (PRD), EAOS and/or Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB).

Fleet Ride with *PTS* will continue to evolve as the Navy makes the system more efficient in order to select the most qualified Sailor. Continue to look at NAVADMINs and other news to keep up to date on this process.

### Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...

You wanted more information on professional development opportunities and areas for growth.

# "CAN DO" COMMUNICATION: FAMILIES & DEPLOYMENT

By Andi Edwards, Ombudsman, 3NCR

## I love my smart phone.

I realize this is a statement that almost all Americans make at one point or another, but for me, my phone is my ticket to keeping in touch with my Seabee. I'm able to take a photo, e-mail it to him, post it to my personal blog and link it to his Facebook page almost simultaneously. Sometimes, soon after I post the picture, he will call me via video chat and say he received my message and loved it.

So what's the kicker? My husband is in Afghanistan. Welcome to the world of the modern military family.

When the Seabees were founded in 1942, communication was much slower. Veteran Seabee wives tell me that they often wrote letters every night. The highlight of their morning was walking that letter to the post office. They would stand at the counter and watch as the envelopes were stamped and sent on their way, knowing that they had just made a connection with their Seabee. It made them feel like they were a part of something important, something real. It gave them a purpose and a way to send a piece of home to their loved one, so many thousands of miles away.

In turn, they would wait for weeks for a reply. When return letters arrived, there was an excitement like no other. Many of these amazing individuals were alone. Some lived far from their immediate families; some made only a few friends. Many did not connect with the families of their fellow Seabees at all, preferring to 'handle my personal life privately.' They



Andi Edwards and her husband, Mike.  
*Photo by Andi Edwards*

took on the challenge of deployment and faced it with only a fistful of letters and a heart full of hope to sustain them.

Fast-forward to 2010 and you will find that communication has increased in volume and velocity so much that hardly anyone writes letters by hand anymore. E-mails, text messages, status updates and tweets have taken the place of morning walks to the post office for many of us. Does this mean that we are somehow a less stalwart group than the families of days gone by? Not necessarily.

I have been working with the Seabee community as an ombudsman for eight years. In that time, I have watched as new technology develops and allows our families to stay instantly connected with our members out in the field as well as with one another during deployment periods. It is a valuable resource in many ways, most importantly in keeping our families well-informed and working as a cohesive unit. When used safely as a tool for family readiness, technology can't be beat.

At the same time, as our technology advances so do the pressures of the military lifestyle. We sometimes find ourselves struggling to keep up with the latest tools or programs that 'everyone else' is using. My family and I are currently assigned to a unit made up of more than 100 Seabees and their families. In that unit, there are more than 100 styles of communication and connectivity. Are any of the families 'doing it wrong?' Absolutely not.

In an effort to thrive in the age of information, I have found the key is to develop a communication plan that meets the needs of your family and your Seabee without regard

**Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...** You wanted more family-related stories of fellow Seabees. You said, "It's good for other family members, active or reserve, to see they are not alone."





to the actions of others. For example, some families are comfortable using every available kind of technology to stay connected. They video chat as often as possible, use text messaging to leave one another notes during the day and update their online statuses to keep their extended family informed. Other families feel more comfortable sending care packages and receiving the occasional phone call. Both of these communication plans are wonderful because they are set in place to meet the needs of that specific family. In communication, keeping up with the Jones's is not the way to go – the key is to keep up with each other.

Dr. Froma Walsh is an expert in the area of family resiliency, or the ability of a family to successfully cope with prolonged stress. In her book, *Strengthening Family Resilience (Second Edition)*, Dr. Walsh states:

“The complex structures and demands in contemporary family life make good communication ever more important yet more difficult...at the very times when it is most essential.”



SWC(SCW) Mike Edwards, safety officer, 3NCR, Afghanistan.  
Photo by MCC(SW) Terrina Weatherspoon

In essence, Dr. Walsh is telling our community what we have known all along – we are only as strong as our communication, only as connected as we decide to be. It is never easy to take the time and make the effort to stay in touch with our Seabees. It is even less convenient to do so with the other families in our commands. Nonetheless, discussion is a vital part of our survival in any deployment situation. No one understands your frustration with deployment better than the families who are going through it with you. No one grasps how much you miss having your entire family under the same roof more than your Seabee. Being able to express those thoughts is a necessary part of coping with the lifestyle changes deployment brings.

Seabee families of the past were pillars of strength in the face of challenge and we are called to that same greatness and grace, even in the age of information. When we take the time to plan out a tailored means of communication with our Seabees, we honor some of our Navy's greatest traditions. When we make the effort to connect to other families in our same situation, we pay homage to the thousands who came before us. Only by working together and communicating effectively can we become a greater, stronger force for good.

Now someone pass me my smart phone. I need to get connected.



Congratulations to 3<sup>rd</sup> NCR Ombudsman Andi Edwards, the Winter 2010 *Seabee* Challenge Coin recipient for her first-hand experiences with technology – Seabee-style... Can Do!

**Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...** "There could be more coverage of community projects and events happening stateside."

## Seabee, Spouse Teach CPR Classes

By NAVFAC HQ Public Affairs and Communications

Information Systems Technician 1<sup>st</sup> Class Joe Thayer, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40, and his wife, Stephanie, regularly conduct American Red Cross cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) classes at Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) Port Hueneme, Calif. These certified instructors have taught CPR to other NMCB 40 personnel, but wanted to go further into their community.

The Thayers are starting a program on base, "CPR Saturday," they implemented during IT1 Thayer's three-year tour in Italy. One Saturday per year, Red Cross personnel set up stations where people can learn CPR for adults, children and infants. After they've mastered those techniques, been instructed in first aid and learned how to use an automated external defibrillator, they take the written test for Red Cross certification.

The Thayers also offer a six-hour adult, child and infant CPR course whenever there's a demand.

*Information compiled from the Ventura County Star, Ventura, Calif.*



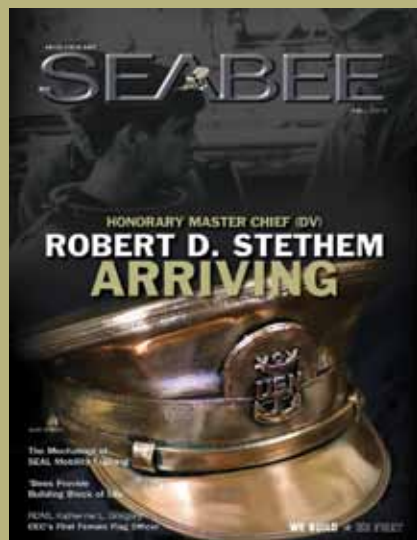
Certified CPR instructors, IT1 Joe Thayer, NMCB 40, and his wife, Stephanie, NBVC Port Hueneme, Calif.

*Photo courtesy of the Ventura County Star*



*Seabee Magazine's* Facebook page is a great tool to submit articles, communicate your feedback and interact with the editor-in-chief.

Become a fan today at [www.facebook.com/seabeemagazine](http://www.facebook.com/seabeemagazine).



### Seabee Magazine Readership Survey Says...

Almost 30 percent of you said you'd access *Seabee Magazine* via Facebook. Visit our Facebook page for all the survey results.

## 2011 SEABEE REUNIONS

### FEBRUARY

**FEB. 25-27**

EAST COAST ALL SEABEE REUNION  
Hampton, VA  
Bruce MacDougall  
804-921-4753  
[seabeemacd40@verizon.net](mailto:seabeemacd40@verizon.net)

#### NMCB 1

Peter Dowd  
781-837-0393  
[mcb1reunion@verizon.net](mailto:mcb1reunion@verizon.net)

#### NMCB 62

Price Richardson  
540-389-0555  
[price\\_richardson@howellsmotor.com](mailto:price_richardson@howellsmotor.com)

### APRIL-MAY

**APRIL 28 – MAY 1**

NMCB 40 / 40<sup>th</sup>  
NCB (All Eras)  
Northbrook, IL  
(Great Lake Reunion)  
Ed Holston  
856-358-2009  
[nmcbfighting40@aol.com](mailto:nmcbfighting40@aol.com)

For a complete list of reunions, visit [www.allseabees.com](http://www.allseabees.com) or the Seabee Historical Foundation at [www.seabeehf.org](http://www.seabeehf.org).



## Service: The Role of Senior Leadership in Taking Care of Junior Troops

By CMDCM(SCW) Neal Beard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment



CMDCM(SCW)  
Neal Beard, USN

With each new promotion we assume more challenging duties, and those duties demand increased responsibility. For me, the most important part of my job is taking care of the junior troops assigned to the command. But it is also the hardest part of my job. Not because it's hard to do – though it can often be challenging – but because it is so easy to lose focus on the big picture and zero in on parts of our job that we are comfortable with or that provide quick gains. We strive for mission accomplishment and completing our job and often set aside our responsibility to train, mentor and develop the junior troops assigned to us.

It's easy to get caught up in achieving short-term goals and gains, and overlook long-term objectives. Taking care of junior troops is not just making sure they get paid, have a place to sleep or keeping them out of trouble. It's also ensuring they learn the correct skills to do their job and that they are constantly improving or sharpening those skills. It's teaching them how to be good leaders by setting the example and then giving them opportunities to lead. It's ensuring they have a safe working environment, and that they understand their role in ensuring their own safety and the safety of those around them. It's teaching them about quality, productivity, integrity and pride in themselves and in the work they do. And it's about teaching them to be honest and fair.

We cannot change the past and often we can do little to affect the present; but we can do something about tomorrow. By constantly improving the troops assigned to us we ensure future mission success

whether that mission occurs next week or 10 years in the future. Every day we have the opportunity given to us to shape the leaders of tomorrow. What our Navy looks like next year or any other year in the future will be what we make of it today in shaping the careers and lives of the troops we lead.

“Every day we have the opportunity given to us to shape the leaders of tomorrow. What our Navy looks like next year...will be what we make of it today in shaping the careers and lives of the troops we lead.”

Every time a service member is promoted or demoted, receives an award or has a performance evaluation completed, his or her achievement or failing is not just the result of the member's efforts (or lack thereof) alone. The success or failure of those assigned to us, who look to us for guidance

and training, is the measure of our own success or shortcomings.

The true measure of who we are, what we believe and what we have accomplished in life can only be seen via the lives of others we affect, not in the certificates hanging on our walls or the level of rank we have attained.

Our role is to serve, not to be served. That's why we call our military branches “services” and our period of time in uniform as “length of service” and refer to our jobs as “serving our country.” We all serve our country, but as leaders we do that by serving those below us, so that their contributions added to our own continue to make our nation strong. We are protecting and ensuring our children's and our nation's future.

Is our number one responsibility as leaders to always take care of our troops? I think it's our one responsibility that matters most.

*Construimus ☆ Batuimus*



*Dear General Petraeus,*

27 September 2010

Thank you for supporting NMCB 18 staying in theater until February. We came here with plans of working hard and supporting the world's most elite soldiers for approximately 7 months, but were devastated when we found out we might only be here for 3 months.

Our detachment here on Camp Alpha wants to make a difference, a difference in the lives of our fellow soldiers and the lives of the local populace. A big responsibility has been bestowed upon us, as the work we do here directly supports the lives of the men and women who venture out every night and day to defend our freedom and the freedom of the United States of America. We are ecstatic to do what we can to make the lives of those men and women that much easier as we know the fight they are fighting is not an easy one.

Thank you again for supporting the decision to keep us here and letting us finish the job that we started. People live their entire lives wanting/trying to make a difference in this world, and that is what we are here doing.

Very Respectfully,

ENS Derek A. Howard, A01C

*Derek A. Howard*  
NMCB 18 Detachment II

*John E. Bata*  
LCOR, USN, CEC, OIC

*Bob Galloway*  
Galloway, Gene

*Bob Galloway*  
BUL (SCW/FMF) MIWA BRYAN  
DET II OPS Chief  
*Bob Galloway*

EA1 (SCW) VALDEZ, Anthony  
DET II OPS ENG  
*Anthony Valdez*

UT1 FAAS, M.L.  
DET II, CAMP "A" UTILITIES LPO

*Mike Banks*  
CM2 BANKS, JOEL N  
DET II, CAMP "A" CAMP MAINT. SUP.  
*Mike Banks*

LC1 (SCW) BARKLEY, C.S.  
DET II ELECTRICIAN CREW LEADER

*Chris Sutton*  
CM3 SUTTON  
*Chris Sutton*

LCUM (SCW/FMF) Jon Bata  
*Jon E. Bata*  
NMCB DET II SEA

*Bob Galloway*  
BUL (SCW) Bob Galloway  
NMCB 18 DET II  
COMBAT CHIEF

*Bob Galloway*  
BUL (SCW) JOHN NONBADIASKI  
NMCB 18 DET 2 AOPS  
EA2 (SCW) BRYAN CARABOYES  
NMCB 18 DET 2 OPS ENG  
*Bob Galloway*

EACN GERONIMO, RICARDO  
NMCB 18 DET II OPS ENG  
*Ricardo Gerónimo*

EO1 FISK, CHARLES R.  
DET II LPU  
*Charles R. Fisk*